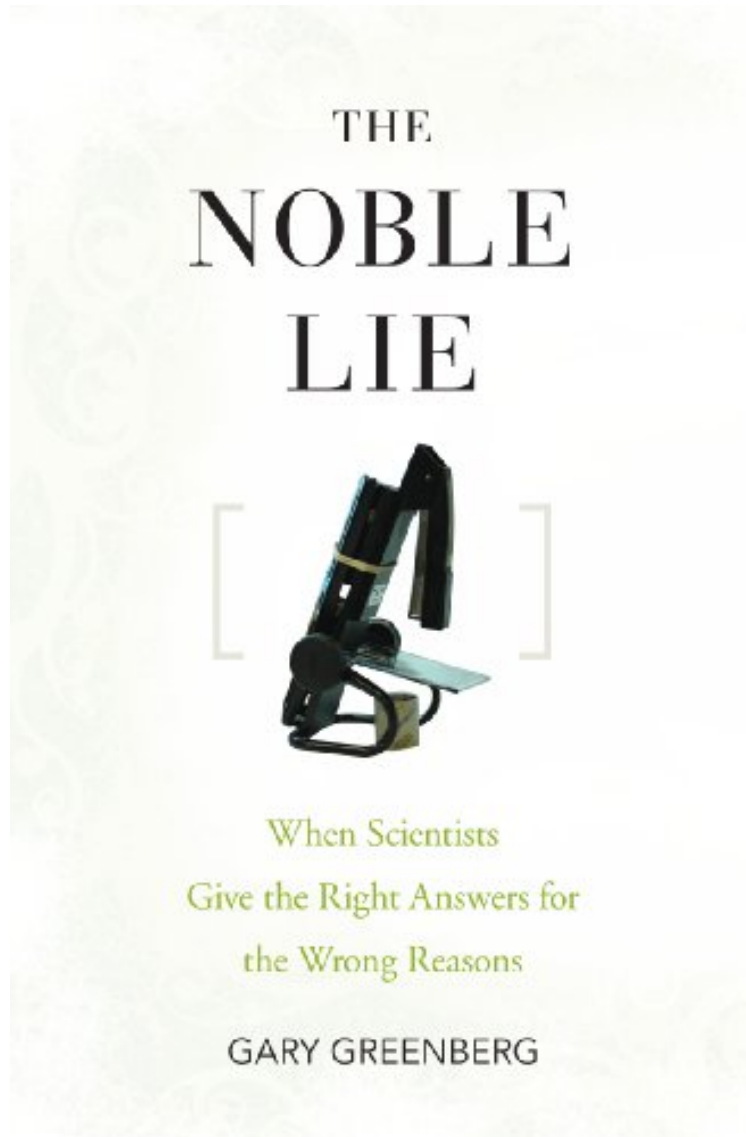


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The Noble Lie: When Scientists Give the Right Answers for the Wrong Reasons

Gary Greenberg

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Gary Greenberg : The Noble Lie: When Scientists Give the Right Answers for the Wrong Reasons before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Noble Lie: When Scientists Give the Right Answers for the Wrong Reasons:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Good Stuff.By PatrasGood stuff about the medical and science systems in life, written by a counselling professional who showed upsides as well as downsides of a host of lies we often swallow. Parts of the book even seemed theraputic. It was very funny as well as elucidating. The Noble Lie:

When Scientists Give the Right Answers for the Wrong Reasons
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This Book Will Challenge The Way You Think
By Bradley Bevers
I can't remember why I picked up this book first, but it's been on my 'to read' shelf for more than a couple years now so I finally picked it up. It's a hard book to review or recommend because the author covers so many controversial topics that it will definitely offend you one way or another. His premise is that though science has come to some good conclusions in many areas, often how they got there is wrongheaded. He covers a variety of topics, from alcoholism to homosexuality to determining death. All of it is really well written and will stretch the way that you think about conclusions and how they are determined behind the scenes. I have zero medical background, so his chapters on brain death and determining whether someone has actually died or not was really interesting. Turns out that our process is more political than scientific, and fails at certain points along the way because we may have a wrong-headed view of what life is. Another topic that was really interesting was his chapter on homosexuality. He gives some interesting background information into why it was removed from the DSM and why he argued against its removal. Turns out that they put it to a vote from the members and the main reasoning behind its removal was that those who displayed these symptoms had no special tendency to display symptoms of other mental illnesses. Greenberg argued that it was a dangerous precedent to set and he also shows why the reasoning and science behind there being a gene that determines sexuality is faulty. His reasoning veers more liberal than most - he argues that there is a spectrum of sexuality and it can change over time depending on influences. Oddly, I think this is also a Christian view of sexual preference determination even though it would be on the other end of the spectrum - Christians have always believed that there is a spectrum of sexuality and that engaging in immoral activity can lead to other sin. As you can see from above, this is a book that will challenge long held assumptions and force you to evaluate things in new ways. It's worth picking up if any of the topics interest you or if you have a medical background.
21 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Thought-provoking Book
By Glenn A. Cheney
In *The Noble Lie*, Dr. Greenberg manages the near impossible. While entertaining the reader with a humor that's both deep and dry, he probes a medical issue that gets right down to the question of what is normality and what, if anything, it's worth. The implications ripple into religion, politics, law, morality, even the nature of consciousness and existence. His interwoven threads of reasoning and observation bring together homosexuality, hallucinogens, the Unibomber, and death. What do they have in common? Well it's a little hard to explain, but Greenberg manages to do it and even makes it look easy. He doesn't exactly answer life's biggest questions, but he renders them as palatable as popcorn. This is a good book for anyone who needs something new to think about. For others, well, there's always hallucinogens and TV.

Is drug addiction really a disease? Is sexuality inborn and fixed or mutable? Science is where we often turn when we can't achieve moral clarity. In *The Noble Lie*, acclaimed and controversial science writer Gary Greenberg shows how scientists try to use their findings to resolve the dilemmas raised by some of the most hotly contested issues of our time, from gay rights to euthanasia and the drug war. He reveals how their answers often turn out to be more fiction than science and explores whether they cause more harm than good.

From Publishers Weekly
Has science replaced religion for a modern society unwilling to bear moral responsibility? Questions of life and death lie in doctors' hands. Even a diagnosis, says science writer and psychologist Greenberg, is a moral statement: the doctor is telling you what's wrong with your life and how to fix it. This unconvincing statement exemplifies Greenberg's difficulties in his muddled attempt to grapple with our faith in scientific truth. Diseases are invented, not discovered, he claims. By exploring various medical issues such as addiction, depression, brain death, he tries to demonstrate that deciding which suffering should be relieved and how is not as simple as applying a stethoscope to a chest; hardly an original idea. The truth becomes a casualty of organized medicine's need to provide relief to all who say they are suffering, and that need is institutionalized and commercialized by structures like the FDA and the drug industry. The noble lie inherent in the treatments offered for common diagnoses can't last, says the author. But while Greenberg's questions about the scientific validity of medical research and treatments are urgent, they have been explored more capably and cogently elsewhere. (Sept.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
Taken from the world of medicine, Greenberg's seven tales caution his readers about the underlying assumptions of certain diagnoses rendered by doctors. With his skepticism informed by a prewriting career as a psychotherapist, Greenberg casts his doubts into humorous form, often at his own expense, as when he describes participating in a clinical trial of fish oil's therapeutic value in treating depression. But first he must pass standard psychological evaluations that determine scientifically if he's officially down in the dumps. Greenberg's mini history of the creation of such evaluation methods underscores their irreducible subjectivity, a facet that also appears in his stories about medical definitions of alcoholism, homosexuality, schizophrenia, comas, and death. In the case of alcoholism, its definition as a disease rather than a weakness originated, amazingly enough, in a 1942 article, not by a medical professional, but by a public relations flack. Yet, Greenberg observes, patients report benefiting from therapies however unscientific he suspects their bases are: that's the noble lie he examines. Alt-medicine fans

will be informed and entertained by this engaging author. --Gilbert Taylor * Has science replaced religion for a modern society unwilling to bear moral responsibility? Questions of life and death lie in doctors' hands. Even a diagnosis, says science writer and psychologist Greenberg, is a moral statement: the doctor is "telling you what's wrong with your life and how to fix it." This unconvincing statement exemplifies Greenberg's difficulties in his muddled attempt to grapple with our faith in scientific truth. Diseases are invented, not discovered, he claims. By exploring various medical issues—such as addiction, depression, brain death—he tries to demonstrate that "deciding which suffering should be relieved and how is not as simple as applying a stethoscope to a chest"—hardly an original idea. The truth becomes a casualty of organized medicine's need to provide relief to all who say they are suffering, and that need is institutionalized and commercialized by structures like the FDA and the drug industry. The "noble lie" inherent in the treatments offered for common diagnoses can't last, says the author. But while Greenberg's questions about the scientific validity of medical research and treatments are urgent, they have been explored more capably and cogently elsewhere. (Sept.) (Publishers Weekly, July 28, 2007)